

**From:**  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Fw: NTSB request for information  
**Date:**

**From:** Ratledge, Aaron T >  
**Sent:** Friday, June 16, 2023 2:34 PM  
**To:** Zagata Zachary <>  
**Subject:** FW: NTSB request for information

[CAUTION] This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click any links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Zach – here are the responses to your recent questions, sir.

Thanks,  
Aaron

- Please provide any rules/policies in place at the time of the accident that limited the number of hours that a track inspector could work (if there were none, please state so).

**Answer:** BNSF does not have any rules or policies that govern the amount of work hours a track inspector may work. We do monitor total hours worked per week, and if it exceeds 84 hours we do our best to redistribute workloads to lower the hours per week. Additionally all BNSF employees are empowered to stop work if they feel safety is at risk. This would include an employee that felt fatigued.

- Please specify the dates that the track inspector was providing assistance in covering two other track inspector positions.

**Answer:** Below you will find the specific answers to your question. However, when interpreting the data please keep the following in mind:

Of the 69 days of inspection record provided, 50 days in total were spent inspecting territories other than the track inspectors assigned territory.

There are columns listed for each territory called OBS and TVS. TVS are main line miles that were traversed (via hrrail) during the inspection. OBS are main line miles that were observed as adjacent main lines that were inspected while traversing the other main line.

June 1<sup>st</sup> for example, the track inspector inspected 118.761 miles in total, 37.138 of which were on the track inspectors assigned territory and 81.623 outside of assigned territory. Of the 37.138 miles inspected within the inspectors territory, 21.638 were inspected from an adjacent track and 15.5 of actual physical traversals.

If you were to focus in on the two highest total mileage days' worth of inspection in September both inspections on 9/16 and 9/23 are relative outliers for the month. Diving into the details of those two high mileage days, you will find on 9/16 of the 126.865 miles inspected 77.620 were traversed and 49.25 observed. On 9/23 you will find 102.940 traversed and 23.930 observed.

Contrast this against an average total inspection day on 9/3 with 68.763 miles total. 62.530 are actually traversed and 6.238 observed.

when you start comparing the data of actual traversed miles inspected, the higher mileage days look very similar to the average days when you account that it is easier to accumulate miles inspected when you are inspecting adjacent track simultaneously.

**6-1-2021: Miles Inspected 118.761**  
**6-2-2021: Miles Inspected 85.577**  
**6-3-2021: Miles Inspected 29.359**  
**6-4-2021: Miles Inspected 77.617**  
**6-7-2021: Miles Inspected 1.1**  
**6-8-2021: Miles Inspected 99.601**  
**6-9-2021: Miles Inspected 1.8**  
**6-10-2021: Miles Inspected 99.601**  
**6-14-2021: Miles Inspected 154.11**  
**6-15-2021: Miles Inspected 66.285**  
**6-17-2021: Miles Inspected 47.337**  
**6-18-2021: Miles Inspected 53.387**  
**6-21-2021: Miles Inspected 32.9**  
**6-22-2021: Miles Inspected 101.547**  
**6-24-2021: Miles Inspected 124.919**  
**6-25-2021: Miles Inspected 6.9**  
**6-28-2021: Miles Inspected 61.136**  
**6-29-2021: Miles Inspected 96.640**  
**6-30-2021: Miles Inspected 133.835**  
**7-1-2021: Miles Inspected 25.567**  
**7-2-2021: Miles Inspected 78.440**  
**7-6-2021: Miles Inspected 30.182**  
**7-8-2021: Miles Inspected 1.946**  
**7-9-2021: Miles Inspected 28.236**  
**7-10-2021: Miles Inspected 20.4**  
**7-17-2021: Miles Inspected 103.758**  
**7-18-2021: Miles Inspected 32.9**  
**7-20-2021: Miles Inspected 86.287**  
**7-21-2021: Miles Inspected 83.903**  
**7-22-2021: Miles Inspected 93.307**  
**7-23-2021: Miles Inspected 150.803**  
**7-26-2021: Miles Inspected 25.1**  
**7-27-2021: Miles Inspected 134.019**  
**7-28-2021: Miles Inspected 70.0**  
**7-29-2021: Miles Inspected 5.429**  
**7-30-2021: Miles Inspected 103.648**  
**7-31-2021: Miles Inspected .3**  
**8-2-2021: Miles Inspected 79.114**  
**8-3-2021: Miles Inspected 78.538**  
**8-4-2021: Miles Inspected 132.501**  
**8-5-2021: Miles Inspected 37.1**  
**8-7-2021: Miles Inspected 39.538**  
**8-9-2021: Miles Inspected 132.501**  
**8-10-2021: Miles Inspected 39.038**  
**8-11-2021: Miles Inspected 70.0**  
**8-12-2021: Miles Inspected 110.739**  
**8-13-2021: Miles Inspected 32.9**

8-16-2021: Miles Inspected 132.863  
8-17-2021: Miles Inspected 39.038  
8-18-2021: Miles Inspected 70.0  
8-19-2021: Miles Inspected 105.739  
8-21-2021: Miles Inspected 32.9  
8-23-2021: Miles Inspected 132.501  
8-24-2021: Miles Inspected 39.038  
8-25-2021: Miles Inspected 70.0  
8-27-2021: Miles Inspected 99.601  
8-28-2021: Miles Inspected 58.218  
8-30-2021: Miles Inspected 105.639  
9-1-2021:Miles Inspected 32.9  
9-2-2021:Miles Inspected 61.136  
9-3-2021:Miles Inspected 68.763  
9-7-2021:Miles Inspected 56.007  
9-10-2021:Miles Inspected 29.261  
9-11-2021:Miles Inspected 52.132  
9-14-2021:Miles Inspected 99.601  
9-16-2021:Miles Inspected 126.865  
9-21-2021:Miles Inspected 73.478  
9-23-2021:Miles Inspected 126.865  
9-27-2021:Miles Inspected 29.061

- Please specify the number of miles associated with each track inspector position that the track inspector was covering.

**Answer: Highlighted in yellow are the limits of Johnson's Territory, other territories listed he was covering.**

Please note that the miles listed are for geographical reference. Some of these areas have multiple main trains, and therefore the track miles would be greater than the total listed.

Roadmaster	Track Inspector	Begin	End	Begin MP	End MP	ML Miles/Inspector	Number of Switches	Number of Curves	Mult. Main?	Yards?	Average ML Miles/Inspector
Callen	Shelby East	Gilford	W. Dunkirk Sw. Yes	988.868	1058.005	70.005	40	27	No	No	66.232
Callen	Shelby West	W. Dunkirk Sw. No	MP 1091.802	1058.005	1091.802	59.691	60	32	Yes	Yes	
Callen	Branchline	Conrad	Sweet Grass	67.1	138.9	69	82	37	No	Yes	

If he was not covering all the miles associated with the other two positions, please clarify which subset of miles he was covering. Please clarify the total number of miles that he was covering during this time period.

**Answer: Attached is the supporting documentation of the covered territories showing the miles being inspected daily.**

Does the following look correct for his time worked from September 1, 2021 – September 25, 2021?

**Answer: Yes**

9-1-2021: 14 hours 45 minutes  
9-2-2021: 17 hours  
9-3-2021: 14 hours and 4 minutes  
9-4-2021: Rest Day  
9-5-2021: Rest Day  
9-6-2021: 8 hours  
9-7-2021: 15 hours and 9 minutes  
9-8-2021: 14 hours  
9-9-2021: 14 hours  
9-10-2021: 13 hours and 30 minutes  
9-11-2021: 14 hours and 16 minutes  
9-12-2021: Rest Day  
9-13-2021: 12 hours and 15 minutes  
9-14-2021: 14 hours  
9-15-2021: 15 hours  
9-16-2021: 14 hours  
9-17-2021: Rest Day  
9-18-2021: Rest Day  
9-19-2021: Rest Day  
9-20-2021: Rest Day  
9-21-2021: 16 hours  
9-22-2021: 12 hours and 45 minutes  
9-23-2021: 13 hours and 30 minutes  
9-24-2021: 15 hours  
9-25-2021: Rest Day

From: Zagata Zachary <>  
Sent: Thursday, May 25, 2023 4:01 PM  
To: Ratledge, Aaron T <>  
Cc: Gordon Robert (Joe) <>; Hoepf Michael <>; Lloyd Troy <>  
Subject: RE: NTSB request for information

**EXTERNAL EMAIL**

Good afternoon, Sir,

Got an additional document/information request and we would like to verify his hours worked.

The following documents (electronic format preferred) are requested to assist in the investigation.

- Please provide any rules/policies in place at the time of the accident that limited the number of hours that a track inspector could work (if there were none, please state so).

- Please specify the dates that the track inspector was providing assistance in covering two other track inspector positions.
- Please specify the number of miles associated with each track inspector position that the track inspector was covering. If he was not covering all the miles associated with the other two positions, please clarify which subset of miles he was covering. Please clarify the total number of miles that he was covering during this time period.

Does the following look correct for his time worked from September 1, 2021 – September 25, 2021?

9-1-2021: 14 hours 45 minutes  
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 9-16-2021: 14 hours  
 9-17-2021: Rest Day  
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 9-19-2021: Rest Day  
 9-20-2021: Rest Day  
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 9-22-2021: 12 hours and 45 minutes  
 9-23-2021: 13 hours and 30 minutes  
 9-24-2021: 15 hours  
 9-25-2021: Rest Day

Thanks,

**Zach Zagata**  
 Rail Accident Investigator  
 National Transportation Safety Board

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**From:** Ratledge, Aaron T <>  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 25, 2023 12:28 PM  
**To:** Zagata Zachary <>  
**Cc:** Gordon Robert (Joe) <>  
**Subject:** FW: NTSB request for information

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Zach – pls find attached and below responses to NTSB’s recent request for information.

Thanks,  
 Aaron

**NTSB Request on Track Inspector:**

- Complete employment history
- Complete training records
- Timesheets for the 2021 calendar year (to include days worked and start and end time for each shift)
- Past performance evaluations
- Previous accidents/incidents
- Discipline history
- Awards and commendations
- Please provide a statement/comment/response to the track inspector’s statement in his interview that he had “been covering four positions most of the summer.”
  - Is this accurate?
    - No. Gregory maintained his position and provided assistance in covering two others during the summer of 2021.
  - Is there a limit to the number of positions that an employee can ‘cover’ at one time?
    - There is no specific rule governing the number of positions covered; however, BNSF monitors the hours worked by its team members very closely to ensure that employees are receiving an adequate amount of time to rest and adjusts work assignments accordingly.
  - Was this an unusual occurrence, and if so, can you explain the circumstances?
    - This was unusual because one Track Inspector bid off the territory, and another track inspector was promoted.
  - Were there any challenges to filling these positions?
    - Yes, there were some challenges based on the remoteness of the location; however, these positions were filled and remain filled today.

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**From:** Zagata Zachary  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 10, 2023 9:43 AM  
**To:** Ratledge, Aaron T <>  
**Cc:** Hoepf Michael <>; Gordon Robert (Joe) <>; Lloyd Troy <>  
**Subject:** NTSB request for information

**EXTERNAL EMAIL**

Good morning, Mr. Ratledge,

As you know we are in the final stages of the report of the development process in the Joplin investigation. We recently received some questions related to the track inspector and need to make an additional information request.

NTSB is requesting the following documents:

For the track inspector:

- Complete employment history
- Complete training records
- Time sheets for the 2021 calendar year (to include days worked and start and end time for each shift)
- Past performance evaluations
- Previous accidents/incidents
- Discipline history
- Awards and commendations

Other

- Please provide a statement/comment/response to the track inspector's statement in his interview that he had "been covering four positions most of the summer."
  - Is this accurate?
  - Is there a limit to the number of positions that an employee can 'cover' at one time?
  - Was this an unusual occurrence, and if so, can you explain the circumstances?
  - Were there any challenges to filling these positions?

Let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,

**Zach Zagata**  
**Rail Accident Investigator**  
**National Transportation Safety Board**